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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505**

13 October 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Operations Groups
from the Staffs of Formations and Large Units
of the Ground Forces During the
Conduct of Combined Exercises

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on articles from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. In this article the role of operations groups in combined operations is discussed. Some of the difficulties such as control, forms and the content of combat documents, and the organization of communications, etc., are brought to the attention of the readers. These difficulties, at least in part, stem from the fact that troops of different national affiliations participate in the combined operations. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article appeared in Issue No. 4, which was published in 1972.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned the [redacted] Codeword [redacted]

William W. Wells

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY BULGARIA/WARSAW PACT

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13 October 1977

SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Operations Groups from the Staffs of Formations and Large Units of the Ground Forces During the Conduct of Combined Exercises

SOURCE: Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article was written by Colonel S.M. MITEV. In this article the role of operations groups in combined operations is discussed. Some of the difficulties such as control, forms and the content of combat documents, and the organization of communications, etc., are brought to the attention of the readers. These difficulties, at least in part, stem from the fact that troops of different national affiliations participate in the combined operations. This article appeared in Issue No. 4, which was published in 1972.

End of Summary

Comment:

The names of authors are given in Russian transliteration.

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Operations Groups from the Staffs of
Formations and Large Units of the Ground Forces
During the Conduct of Combined Exercises
(According to the Experience of the Bulgarian People's Army)

by

Colonel S.M. MITEV

Chief of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff
of the Bulgarian People's Army

In recent years a number of combined exercises have been conducted with the staffs and troops of allied armies of the member states of the Warsaw Pact. The staffs and troops participating in these carried out the tasks assigned to them in coalition operational formations.

The experience of similar exercises in which staffs from formations and large units of the Bulgarian People's Army participated indicates that marked difficulties in control and in organizing cooperation among troops of several nationalities arise as a result of the differences existing in the languages, and in the forms and content of combat documents, in the structure and equipping of the staffs and troops, and in the organization of communications.

For this reason, to assure more reliable control, cooperation and communications among staffs and troops who are in combined operations, the assignment (exchange) of operations groups to the staffs of formations and large units of another allied army is practiced at the exercises.

In our opinion, such practice is justified.

The main purpose of these groups, as we see it, is to give practical assistance to the command and staffs in ensuring coordinated actions of formations and large units of allied troops, in maintaining stable communications among the control organs, and also in solving in a timely manner various problems of mutual activities which arise during the combined actions of troops of different national affiliation.

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In their activities, operations groups, in our opinion, cannot substitute for the control organs.

Depending on the situation and the tasks which the troops were to accomplish, operations groups were sent out according to the principle: from the senior staff to a resubordinated staff, and from a resubordinated staff to a superior staff, and from an adjacent unit on the right to one on the left; a mutual exchange of such groups was also carried out among cooperating allied control organs.

In our opinion, the main purpose of operations groups is to provide assistance during the accomplishment of combined tasks. In confirmation of this opinion, we can cite an example from the second period of the Great Patriotic War which our people waged against the German-fascist aggressors. The 1st Bulgarian Army, which participated in the final destruction of Hitler Germany, was a component of the 3rd Ukrainian Front. To assist the commanders and staffs of our army and to coordinate their combat actions with the Soviet command, the staff of the 3rd Ukrainian Front dispatched operations groups to the staff of the 1st Bulgarian Army and staffs of the divisions. Operations groups, while not substituting for the respective commanders, provided invaluable assistance to them in carrying out orders and instructions from the higher level, and also in assimilating the rich combat experience of the Soviet Army.

At the command-staff exercise VESNA-72 (SPRING-72) (in March, 1972) operations groups of various levels carried out a large volume of diverse tasks. The following tasks were assigned to groups dispatched by the front staff to the staffs of resubordinated formations of allied armies: to assist the army staff in receiving in a timely manner and correctly understanding the orders and instructions issued by the front staff; to promptly report available reconnaissance data on the enemy and essential information on the nature of the actions of their own troops to the command of the allied army formation; to assist the resubordinated commanders and staffs in receiving required data and instructions concerning the organization of combat actions, the thorough support of their troops and the organization of control; to inform the front staff without delay concerning progress in the fulfilment by subordinates of the tasks assigned to them; to assist in filling the requests of the staffs of the

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armies concerning their combat activities; to assist the command of the allied army in solving materiel and everyday services, medical, and other support problems which occurred.

For the successful fulfilment of their tasks, we required the operations groups to have a good understanding of the status and combat tasks of their troops and of the allied troops resubordinated to the front (army): to take into consideration differences in the T/O&E structure, changes in personnel, armament, and combat equipment which occurred during combat actions, and the maintenance of communications with them; and to be precise and disciplined in their work.

In addition to the immediate tasks of providing control and maintaining cooperation during combined combat actions, the operations groups assisted cooperating staffs and troops in solving materiel and everyday services, medical and mass-cultural problems.

Operations groups assigned from the staff of a formation (large unit) of the Bulgarian People's Army to an equivalent staff of another national allied army are charged with the following: in the fulfilment of general combat tasks to inform the allied staff on the status of their own troops; to survey all problems concerning the preparation and conduct of combined actions and support for the flanks; to report the requests of their own command and the progress in their fulfilment; to promptly transmit to their own staffs data on the status and condition of cooperating troops, their tasks and requests; to maintain reliable communications with them, etc.

Experience shows that to successfully carry out their tasks these operations groups are required to know well the composition, condition, status, capabilities, and tasks of their own troops.

In our opinion, depending on the situation which has actually developed, it will sometimes be advisable to assign operations groups from the General Staff of a given state to the staffs of the formations (large units) of allied armies which are crossing, or are temporarily billeted in, the territory of this state. In our view, these groups must have as their main task the provision of complete assistance to the command of the allied

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formation (large unit) in maintaining communications with the control organ which assigned the group, and with the troops of the allied army, and in establishing the necessary contacts with local organs of authority on problems of the movement, billeting and support of the allied troops.

Such groups were also assigned during the exercise VESNA-72 to the staffs of the allied troops.

As was stated above, at a number of combined exercises of the Bulgarian People's Army the assignment of operations groups from resubordinated staffs to a senior control organ was also practiced. In this case operations groups temporarily assigned by resubordinated staffs to a superior level accomplished the following tasks: assisted the senior staff in receiving in a timely manner and correctly understanding combat documents which they had sent to the superior staff; promptly reported the requests of their own commanders to the superior chief; transmitted the decisions received to their own commanders; when necessary, informed the superior commander and staff concerning the condition and combat activities of their own troops and their plans for the further development of the battle (operation).

In our view, the successful accomplishment by various operations groups of the tasks assigned to them will depend to a great extent on their composition and equipping, the level of operational-tactical training of their generals and officers, continuously operating communications with the respective staffs, and the conditions established for their operation.

Experience which we have acquired indicates that the composition of operations groups depends on their purpose, assigned tasks, the operational-tactical situation and the nature of combined actions (resubordination or cooperation). We believe that operations groups assigned from the control organs of operational formations can consist of four to ten men each, and those assigned from the control organs of large units, two to five men with the required communications means and transport.

Operations groups which will be assigned by resubordinated staffs to a superior staff can have fewer personnel.

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According to the experience of combined command-staff and tactical exercises, as a rule, the groups formed have included generals and officers from the operations directorates (departments), reconnaissance and communications personnel, occasionally interpreters, and also representatives from other branch arms and services depending on the situation which developed.

Our experience shows that an absolutely essential condition for the successful operation of operations groups is their personnel's knowledge of the Russian language. It is advisable to include officers in the group who know the language of the allied country.

Each operations group was provided with the equipment necessary for its operation: communications means; callsigns; topographic maps; secure troop control documents; standardized forms (express forms); reference material; transport and personal weapons.

We believe that staffs to which operations groups are attached are obligated to provide them with everyday services support and to establish for them conditions conducive to productive work.

In our view, in order to accumulate the practical experience necessary and to work out in advance problems which are to be solved in a combat situation, it is advisable for the staffs to continuously exchange operations groups during the combined exercises of allied armies, formations, and large units. This will establish the conditions most favorable for mutual study of the operating methods of staffs, the training system of armies from allied countries, and the improvement of the officers' knowledge of the appropriate national language. Such an exchange took place during the combined command-staff exercise VESNA-72 in the Bulgarian People's Republic. The allied staffs participating in this exercise assigned a total of approximately 20 operations groups with various purposes and compositions from the superior staffs to the subordinate ones, from the subordinate staffs to the superior ones, and among the allied formations and large units cooperating during the operation.

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The presence of officers who know the Russian language and a well-trained communications officer is advisable in operations groups. Groups must have identically transcribed topographic maps and other operational documents needed for their work.

The work of an operations group was most effective when the group carried out tasks while in close contact with the operations directorate (department).

In our opinion, taking into consideration the national characteristics of the structure and training of our armies, it is advisable for operations groups, which the staffs of formations (large units) from one allied army intend to assign to another, to be organizationally set up in advance, to undergo special training, and during combined exercises to regularly participate in them. To do this, it is necessary for these groups to include officers who have attained a high level of operational-tactical and special training which would enable them to successfully carry out their assigned tasks.

Experienced generals and officers from appropriate staffs of the national armies should be appointed the superior officers in operations groups.

In our opinion, the problem of the subordination and interrelations of operations groups and the staffs to which they are assigned is of considerable interest. These problems have not only theoretical, but also great practical importance for the establishment of the conditions needed for firm operational control of coalition troops.

Based on the purpose and tasks of the operations groups, we believe that they must be subordinated to those commands which assigned and sent them to carry out the tasks, and also to the command of the designated staff if they were assigned from a lower staff.

On arrival at the designated place, the chiefs of the operations groups are required to present themselves to the formation commander (large unit commander), his deputies, and the chief of staff, and to report on the task assigned to them.

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The operations group must organize and conduct its work in close cooperation and collaboration with the operations directorate (department) of the staff in which they are working.

Generals and officers of operations groups are subordinated to the chief of staff of the formation (large unit) in which they are working on matters of internal order, work, and discipline.

The rights and responsibilities of personnel depend on the purpose and task of the group.

In conclusion, it is necessary to stress that the role and significance of operations groups assigned to the staffs of resubordinated and cooperating formations and large units during combined combat actions of allied armies of the Warsaw Pact countries, in our opinion, has increased under modern conditions.

A clarification of the operating methods and advance training of operations groups and an exchange of experience along this line have vital significance for the successful control of troops of fraternal armies who are in combined operations. In this respect, the experience accumulated during recent combined exercises, which it is necessary to thoroughly study and use, is extremely valuable. This was also confirmed at the combined command-staff exercise VESNA-72 conducted in March 1972 in the Bulgarian People's Republic.

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